

At what point in the transition period are livestock producers required to obtain certification? Must they obtain certification before transition begins, or can they wait until they have product ready to sell?

There is no "transitional organic" under the National Organic Program (NOP) regulations. For the best answer to this question, you may want to work with a local extension agent, who understands the NOP regulations, or contact a certifying agent, or look at the NOP regulations on the NOP web site. It is critical that you have an organic system plan that shows how you are able to fully comply with the NOP regulations for livestock. If you are requesting certification for a ruminant livestock operation, for example, you would have to show that you have pasture for your livestock, and that pasture would have to be certified to have no prohibited substances applied to it for 3 years prior to any crops harvested from that land. Ruminant livestock would need to be organic either from the last third of gestation for slaughter stock, or managed organically for 12 months prior to the sale of any milk products. Plan accordingly, and contact a USDA-accredited certifying agent.

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